

# We Choose Canada... It's Cool to be Canadian!

**O**n July 1st, 2003, Canada Day, Donna Messer and Debbie Trenholm launched We Choose Canada a grass roots initiative for Canadians, immigrants and residents to share their stories about why Canadians choose to live and work in this great country. In less than one week, the web site had over 1700 visitors and countless stories had been submitted.

In less than a month there were more than 4800 visitors registered with most of them sharing their stories on why they choose to live, work and raise a family in Canada. [www.wechooscanada.com](http://www.wechooscanada.com)

Why? Because Canadians are cool and are no longer satisfied being just nice! We Choose Canada provides an opportunity for Canadians to tell their stories and to share their insight on what it's like to be Canadian.

What started this initiative was a "word of mouth" email campaign, with both Debbie and Donna interviewing people, young and old, in their own neighbourhoods. Their travel expands as they receive invitations from every province and territory. We Choose Canada has raced across the country like wildfire and it doesn't look like the "fire" will be contained. And that's good news!

The stories are coming in from people like Bob Sherwin, who says, "The Canadian government, and the fellow residents of this country, are, for the most part, strong supporters of the free enterprise system that is the foundation of this country. Because of this, I am allowed to freely express my own views." Bob is a radio host on Hometown Drive Home, am900 CHML Radio, Hamilton, Ontario.

From Yvonne, who says proudly "From Beginning of Time and Through the Changes - I belong to Canada. The

reason for this is that I am a First Nations Woman known as Life-Giver and Caretaker to my children, family and community. I can trace my ancestry to beginning of time to this great land through the legends of my family. Despite the challenges, we have managed to continue



to hold the treasures of our culture close to our heart and pass them on to our children. We call ourselves Canadian proudly as we share our stories of how our ancestors help shape the lands of today in unity with many nations."

Gerard has this to say about why he chose Canada "I came to Canada from Bombay, India. After arriving in Canada, I fell in love with the place; I love the diversity and the respect that most of the people show towards each other's culture, religion and beliefs. I feel at home here."

Irwin believes that "Canadians, wherever we live, share common values. These values are reflected in our public policies that serve a country of vast distances and a relatively small population. As Canadians, we believe and understand what community means. And because we understand the meaning of community, we believe that we have a responsibility to care for one another. Whether it's a public broadcasting system or a national health care system, we believe that all Canadians should contribute to and share in the public good."

In less than one month, the initiative received more than \$100,000 in media coverage, throughout Canada and around the world. Articles have appeared in national newspapers, the pair

have been interviewed by CBC radio and television across the country. They have been on local radio and television and seen articles on We Choose Canada appear in most regional newspapers.

With West Nile Virus, SARS, Mad Cow disease and a rising Canadian dollar – Canadians want good news, and this initiative offers all Canadians the chance to share their POSITIVE stories with the rest of the world. According to both Debbie and Donna, "Once the cross Canada tour is complete, the collected stories will be featured in a book that will showcase the diversity of our nation, the array of cultures and be a voice for what Canada has to offer." Publishers are already courting the pair!

USA Today published an article about WE CHOOSE CANADA, and the journalist stated that, "Canada is cool again". There have been many other non-Canadian journalists who support the same point of view, even one from Britain! Debbie Trenholm is taking We Choose Canada international and will be spending time in Europe. She will meet with Canadian expatriates, and attend a conference for European Business Women, inviting them to share their stories.

Forget Canadians just being "Nice", now we are "Cool", and this is good news. It's time to stand up and let the world know that being Canadian, and doing business with Canada is a good idea. *BWC*

**About We Choose Canada:** *We Choose Canada is grassroots initiative to showcase why Canadians and immigrants love to live in Canada. Their stories will be from a variety of perspectives, collected by visiting and interviewing people across the country and gathering online submissions at [www.wechooscanada.com](http://www.wechooscanada.com). We Choose Canada promotes the good news about our country; a place that we are proud to call home.*